Academic Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Studies

Hasan Elías ▸ **Academic Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Studies**
August 7 at 1:41 AM ·

I think there are at least 2 Tablets where Abdul-Baha states with a strong language that having 2 wives is legal and that he did not derogate the Aqdas (he accepts that the Aqdas allows 2 wives). But there is also another Tablet where he states the opposite. It seems this last Tablet is the one Shoghi Effendi knew and quoted many times in letters.

My question is: Did Shoghi Effendi know the other tablets?

1. If he knew: why he choose that one and discard the others saying in a letter "there is one Tablet of Abdul-Baha" when in fact there are at least 2 Tablets on the topic where he states that the Aqdas is not derogated and 2 wives is allowed.

2. If he did not know: Did this have an effect on his infallibility as interpreter? (Infallibility depends or not in ignoring/not knowing a Tablet which states the opposite of another)

3. This question I would not dare to ask but Can Abdul-Baha contradict himself?

Thanks in advance for your responses.

This I added later (source of translations is Sen McGlinn):

"Bigamy" tablet 1:
"Concerning bigamy, this has been promulgated, and no one must abrogate it. 'Abdu'l Baha has not abrogated this law. These are false accusations and lies (spread by) the friends. What I have said is that He has made bigamy bound on a precondition. As long as someone does not attain certitude regarding the capability to practice justice and his heart is not at rest that he can practice justice, he should not be intent upon a second marriage. But if he should be sure and attain certitude that he would practice justice on all levels, then a second marriage is lawful. Just as has been the case in the Holy Land the Baha'i friends wished to marry a second wife, accepting this precondition, and this servant never abstained, but insisted that justice should be considered, and justice actually means here self restraint; but they said, that they will practice justice and wished to marry a second wife. Such false accusations are the slanderous whisperings of those who wish to spread doubts and to what degree they already succeed in making matters ambiguous! Purpose was to state that bigamy without justice is not lawful and that justice is very difficult." [Amr wa Khalq 4: 174f]

"Bigamy" tablet 2:

"You asked about polygamy. According to the text (nass) of the Divine Book, having two wives is permitted ja'iz). This was never (abadan) prohibited, but it is legitimate and allowed (halal wa mubah). You should therefore not be unhappy, but take justice into your consideration so that you may be as just as possible. What has been said was that since justice is very difficult, therefore tranquility is in one wife. But in your case, you should not be unhappy." ['Abdu'l-Baha, cited in Amr wa Khalq 4: 174]

The "monogamy" tablet:
"Know thou that polygamy is not permitted under the law of God, for contentment with one wife hath been clearly stipulated. Taking a second wife is made dependent upon equity and justice being upheld between the two wives, under all conditions. However, observance of justice and equity towards two wives is utterly impossible. The fact that bigamy has been made dependent upon an impossible condition is clear proof of its absolute prohibition. Therefore it is not permissible for a man to have more than one wife".

Later addition:
This is the letter I was referring to, although it does say "the Master's Tablet":
"Regarding Bahá'í marriage; in the light of the Master's Tablet interpreting the provision in the Aqdas on the subject of the plurality of wives, it becomes evident that monogamy alone is permissible, since, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá states, bigamy is conditioned upon justice, and as justice is impossible, it follows that bigamy is not permissible, and monogamy alone should be practised."

Like Comment

2

Sören Rekel-Bludau
Dear Hasan,
do you have a link for these tw o Tablets? I don't know them either.

on Tue Like Reply More

Hasan Elías
Sören Rekel-Bludau I w ill search in a moment

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Hasan Elías
"Concerning bigamy, this has been promulgated, and no one must abrogate it. 'Abdu'l Baha has not abrogated this law. These are false accusations and lies (spread by) the friends. What I have said is that He has made bigamy bound on a precondition. As long as someone does not attain certitude regarding the capability to practice justice and his heart is not at rest that he can practice justice, he should not be intent upon a second marriage. But if he should be sure and attain certitude that he w ould practice justice on all levels, then a second marriage is law ful. Just as has been the case in the Holy Land the Baha'i friends w ished to marry a second w ife, accepting this precondition, and this servant never abstained, but insisted that justice should be considered, and justice actually means here self restraint; but they said, that they w ill practice justice and w ished to marry a second w ife. Such false accusations are the slanderous w hisperings of those w ho w ish to spread doubts and to w hat degree they already succeed in making matters ambiguous! Purpose w as to state that bigamy w ithout justice is not law ful and that justice is very difficult." [Amr w a Khalq 4: 174f]

1

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Hasan Elías
Sören Rekel-Bludau "Know thou that polygamy is not permitted under the law of God, for contentment w ith one w ife hath been clearly stipulated. Taking a second w ife is made dependent upon equity and justice being upheld betw een the tw o w ives, under all conditions. How ever, observance of justice and equity tow ards tw o w ives is utterly impossible. The fact that bigamy has been made dependent upon an impossible condition is clear proof of its absolute prohibition. Therefore it is not permissible for a man to have more than one w ife".

2

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Hasan Elías
The other tablet I have to loook for today at night, if other member of the group can find it, it w ould be great. BTW is also in Amr w a khalq

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Hasan Elías

Sören Rekel-Bludau
I found the second "contradictory" tablet in Sen's blog:

"You asked about polygamy. According to the text (nass) of the Divine Book, having two wives is permitted ja'iz). This was never (abadan) prohibited, but it is legitimate and allowed (halal wa mubah). You should therefore not be unhappy, but take justice into your consideration so that you may be as just as possible. What has been said was that since justice is very difficult, therefore tranquility is in one wife. But in your case, you should not be unhappy." ['Abdu'l-Baha, cited in Amr wa Khalq 4: 174]
https://senmcglinn.wordpress.com/2008/03/29/the-puzzle-of-the-aqdas-joining-a-few-pieces/

The puzzle of the Aqdas: joining a few...
senmcglinn.wordpress.com

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Sören Rekel-Bludau
I think that this Tablet is a special case given that the recipient already had two wives and possibly asked the Master whether he had to divorce one of them.

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Hasan Elías
Sören Rekel-Bludau we can speculate but we dont know

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Sören Rekel-Bludau
'Abdu'l-Bahá clearly refers to the "case" of the recipient and tells him that he "should not be unhappy". He also tells the recipient that he should be as just as possible - which clearly tells us that there are in fact two wives. He then repeats His explanation that one wife was the norm because justice between two wives was nearly impossible. Before and after repeating this he tells the recipient not to be unhappy. So it is - at least for me - clear that this was the message of 'Abdu'l-Bahá the recipient was originally disturbed by.

1

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Jack McLean
I find it interesting that Sen in his blog does not actually quote the Guardian's explicit interpretation of the Aqdas regarding bigamy. (See LOG: #1280). For somebody who is usually thorough, this is a strange omission to make. The Guardian wrote through his secretary to a man who wanted to take a second wife with whom he had fallen in love and who wanted to divorce his first wife whom he had married out of compassion "that our teachings do not only *preclude the possibility of bigamy,* but also, while permitting divorce, consider it a reprehensible act, which should be resorted to only in exceptional circumstances... " Nor does Sen quote the explanation given in n. 89 of the Aqdas that refers to "a number of Tablets" (plural) in which the Master in effect prescribes monogamy. He says only that it's abrogated in the notes. Again in his blog, he has jumped to a very large conclusion by saying that infertility has been carried over from the Bayan as the basis for taking a second wife in the Aqdas. There's nothing in any of the texts that he has provided that warrants that interpretation. Also, the main point of Abdu'l-Baha's vehement denial that He had forbidden bigamy was not to approve it, but rather to deny that He was a Manifestation of God who had usurped the authority to abrogate Islamic law. Too much has also been made of the text in which the Master gives the believer permission to keep his second wife. The man was obviously worried that the law of the Aqdas might have required him to divorce one of the two women to whom he was married because of Baha'u'llah's emphasis to be content with monogamy, that is with one wife only. (KA para. 63). So the emphasis has been misplaced in the citation of that passage. The Master was assuring him that the preference that Baha'u'llah expresses for monogamy would not require him to divorce one of his two wives. 2

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Hasan Elías
Jack McLean I think you should write this in his blog or tag him here so he can answer.

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Shidan Cummings
Jack McLean generally I'm on the same page as you. But I do think it likely that the Bayanic law, allowing the fertile spouse (who is married to an infertile one) to take one more spouse in order to have children, with the current spouses permission, is clothed in new words in the bigamous passage in the Aqdas. Baha'u'llah seems to, at least, take and approve that, as well as the passage at the end of where the Báb allows bigamy, namely to bring forth one who will make mention of God amidst His servants.

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Jack McLean
Shidan Cummings Thanks. I must have missed that passage. Can you show me the passage where Bahaullah links taking a second wife to infertility? Is there such a passage? If so I must have missed it.

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Jack McLean
Hasan Elías I have noticed that you seem to be a big fan of Sen McGlinn. You often quote from his material. Are you an advocate for him? You quote him more often than any other scholar and you appear to favor his interpretations of the Baha'i Faith.

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John Haukness
Sören Rekel-Bludau possibly

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Shidan Cummings
Jack McLean In the Bayan it is in the 8th Unity, Gate 16 paragraph 2 of the explanation. Baha'u'llah does not reference the Bayan when quoting from it, but he rarely does so. He does say in Ishraqat that "....in the realm of His Revelation these laws were made subject to Our sanction, hence this Wronged One hath put some of them into effect by embodying them in the Kitab-I-Aqdas in different words. Others we set aside." This is where the connection can be made.

It is impossible to say what Baha'u'llah meant when quoting the Bayan in this case though, because He didn't embody the same teaching in different words, but used the same words to convey an explicit meaning with an unknown implicit meaning, which we are discussing now. What to do in that situation? Hard to say since I don't believe the Guardian interpreted the connection between the Aqdas and Bayan in regards to fertility. Therefore this is more a theoretical discussion about principle and exploring the veiled meaning of things rather than stating what should become law.

We can all state our beliefs and ideas though. I for one find it consistent with Baha'u'llah's other teachings if we accept He was intending to include the Bab's infertility law when quoting his two-spouses law, regardless of any future monogamous interpretation. 1

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Hasan Elías
Jack McLean "fan" is not the correct word, I comment also in William McCant's blog but without response! Sen and I have topics of common interest, and he is one of the few scholars that does real research, also he takes the time to answer idiomatic questions.

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Hasan Elías
Jack McLean I am "fan" of poeple like Messi, Mozart, M. Jordan, Shah Rukh Khan, Avatar movie, etc. I hope you understand the difference.

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Shidan Cummings
Hasan Elías I don't think it's fair to question why people like or quote from one scholar more often than others...but on behalf of an entire younger generation of Baha'is, your comment about "real research" is a tad insulting and questionable.

Much Baha'i scholarship is kept at the local level and published in places not readily accessible by the masses. I also dont see many youth in these groups...we tend to like local discussion groups, deepenings, every day elevated conversions, as well as talks and seminars. I have found the level of scholarship among Baha'i youth in advanced clusters fairly high, especially considering many pursue higher education in subjects that require researching and referencing skills, and are themselves fairly active in the Cause.

Finally, many who are not learned in the academic and scholastic sense are creating an immense body of learning through community building activities and actually putting Baha'u'llah's teachings to practice to solve problems at the neighbourhood level. At such a level you can flesh out and test understandings of the Writings and gain higher levels of knowledge.

I'm sure you didn't mean to be insulting...but I had to speak up on behalf of myself and others. I also enjoy Sen's publications. 1

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Hasan Elías
Shidan Cummings it is just my personal perception w hich could be w rong as I am not and dont consider myself a scholar. Sorry if it offends. 1

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Hasan Elías
In search for truth I think the searcher should not be a fan of other searcher, fan clubs should not exist!

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Hasan Elías
Shidan Cummings about the fertility reason to take another spouse. I know this is Sen's view but it lacks of evidence in the w ritings.

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Hasan Elías
Shidan Cummings in the Will and Testament and in other Tablets, Abdul-Baha said that nobody can change Baha'u'llah's law s and the House can make supplementary legislation and entirely new law s. But w e have here Abdul-Baha saying that Baha'u'llah promulgated bigamy. I am not sure of the orginal w ord for "bigamy" but it is clear the House cannot change that, no?

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Sören Rekel-Bludau
Hasan Elías, no, the Universal House of Justice cannot change law s explicitly revealed in the Aqdas.

As to Bahá'u'lláh promulgating bigamy: I camnot see any evidence that 'Abdu'l-Bahá says that His father favored bigamy over monogamy. 1

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Jack McLean
Shidan Cummings It's very possible that Baha'u'llah intended to cover the Bab's law on taking a second spouse in the case of infertility, but unless w e have scriptural evidence for it, it's speculative. Sen gave it as the reason for the seeming approval of bigamy in the Aqdas, but I don't see any scriptural evidence for that position.

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Jack McLean
Hasan Elías The w ord fan comes from the w ord fanatic. "I hope you understand the difference."

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Jack McLean
Hasan Elías Objection to the condescending remark "I hope you understand the difference." Hence my reply. If you like Sen's answ ers, you should ask him to publish *all* the correspondence he received from the Universal House of Justice that disagreed w ith his theory about the separation of church and state in the Baha'i w ritings.

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Hasan Elías
Jack McLean I know. What do you w ant to say or ask

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Hasan Elías
Sören Rekel-Bludau evidence of promulgation bigamy? What about the first quote?
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Sören Rekel-Bludau
Hasan Elías, okay, in the sense that Bahá'u'lláh in fact revealed a law concerning bigamy you are right, but I don't understabd the term to mean "Bahá'u'lláh says bigamy is good for everyone". 1
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Jack McLean
Hasan Elías. Getting answ ers from Baha'i scholars is a tricky business. One cannot count on it. I did receive replies to my queries from Will McCants because I am not an Arabist, but I have other friends w ho are Baha'i scholars, some of w hom I have know n for many years, w ho have not taken the time to respond to some of my questions, although they have done so in the past. I think it depends on how busy they are and w hat they're w orking on. But I think a courteous reply is in order even if they don't have time to address the question fully. It's best not to take these things personally.
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Hasan Elías
Jack McLean oh is this topic... start a new posting so w e can discuss it there. I think he posted those letters too.
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Jack McLean
There is a difference betw een "real research" and the conclusions of research. The conclusions matter as much, if not more, than the quality of the research itself. One can be a very skilled researcher, one can learn Arabic and Persian. One can have academic titles and w rite articles and books and still show evidence of faulty scholarship if the conclusions that are draw n from the research are erroneous. People w ho have attacked the Baha'i Faith have done so under the guise of scholarship, w ith lots of footnotes and a huge bibliography. It doesn't mean that their conclusions are correct.
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Hasan Elías
Jack McLean I have to block you since many things you are asuming w ithout basis.
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Sören Rekel-Bludau
Dear friends, please stop talking about other people and question their motives.
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Shidan Cummings

Hasan Elías I have already explained both of the points you've countered. The House can make laws based on interpretations of the Master that show the true hidden meaning and intent of an explicit law of Baha'u'llah, which COULD (depending) essentially making the House law have the opposite effect as Baha'u'llah's original law. This is not abrogation or change of the Aqdas, it is law based on the correct intent of the original, based on the authorized interpreters interpretation. I hope my restatement has made it clear what I am trying to say.

For fertility, as **Jack McLean** and I note in this thread, it is a speculative discussion about the hidden meaning of an explicit law, and as a result no one can truly say what exactly Baha'u'llah was trying to incorporate from the Bayan in this case. However, to say it has no evidence in the Writings is simply untrue, elsewhere in this thread I have referenced the exact place in the Bayan where the laws on fertility are located (unless you don't consider the Bayan to be Writings) which is evidence...the speculation comes in to play when you connect it to Baha'u'llah's law in the Aqdas. The connection could be wrong of course, that's why we discuss and conduct research and learn from experience, but it is not an argument that "lacks of evidence".

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Hasan Elías

Shidan Cummings thanks for your answer...

What I said is that the position of Sen has no basis in the writings. The position is the connection he sees between the Bayan and the Aqdas about bigamy.

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Shidan Cummings
That he quoted one doesn't mean he didn't know of the other two, but that he believed the one overrode the other two. I believe the one quoted in the Aqdas is the more recent one.

Also, that Abdu'l-Baha allowed, and that the Kitab-I-Aqdas states, that two spouses (not just wives) are the limit on any believer, the House of Justice can pass its own laws to the contrary IF there is an authoritative interpretation to the contrary.

So, if the Master interpreted that in reality Baha'u'llah was telling people to be monogamous, but that he didn't forbid people from being polygamous by law...the House can take the Masters interpretation and put it into force as law. Even if the Master did not. It is the Houses role to bring teaching into law (contrary to the interpreters).

Also keep in mind that when the Master or Guardian interpreted certain laws and teachings to what was seemingly a contrary result, they still have not abrogated a law. The Master uses strong language because Covenant Breakers were spreading rumours about him abrogating law, which was not in his power.

I think **Sen McGlinn** can link some of his work on this? 1

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John Haukness
Shidan Cummings well stated, insiuatioyor jumping to conclusion somehow Guardian is prone to errors of judgement are most unfounded

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Hasan Elías
Shidan Cummings that is not a problem as long as the interpretation is the same, but it changed to the opposite in the Master's lifetime.

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Hajir John Moghaddam
Hasan, I think in the distant future we'll go back to bigamy (two wives one husband). It doesn't make sense today, as Abdulbaha pointed out elsewhere. So this, like many other laws of the Aqdas are on "hold". 1

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Arthur Logan Decker III
I can't even find one wife...let alone two 4

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Arthur Logan Decker III

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Hajir John Moghaddam
i can't even handle being bossed around by one let alone two. 4

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Arthur Logan Decker III
You have a lovely family, brother! Truly a blessing! 🙂 1

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Hasan Elías
Hajir John Moghaddam that w as a good one 🙂

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Yasmin Mellinghoff
Hajir John Moghaddam poor you! 😉

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Hasan Elías
Hajir John Moghaddam w as not monogamy the eternal ideal?

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John Haukness
Hajir John Moghaddam no one here has any authority to put anything on hold. We should hold ourselves to be so smart

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Hasan Elías
John Haukness just to clarify, if one comments here or in any other place, this doesnt mean the commentator or the comments have authority, w e are just sharing view s and w e need to respect the other's view s even if they are not evident in the w ritings and even if they are contrary to ours. If Baha'u'llah w as the Universal Manifestation and if in His Dispensation humanity w ill reach w orld unity and peace, then the question arises w hy He did not promulgate monogamy but bigamy? So the "hold" idea stands as valid, but not necessarily true.

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John Haukness
This has been explained, He w as born in this era. I see many comments here w ritten as if an expression of authority.

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Jack McLean
The alleged contradiction is not really a problem. At one point Abdu'l Baha allow ed the Iranian friends to participate in politics, but w hen He saw the result, He countermanded His previous tablet w ith another one. There are zero implications for the infallibility of either Abdul Baha or Shoghi Effendi. Since the ministry of Abdul Baha, at least His earthly ministry, ended w ith His death, and w ith the assumption of Shoghi Effendi to the guardianship, the Guardian's interpretation, according to the clear provisions of the Will and Testament of the Master is the final interpretation and binding on all the friends. Abdul Baha did not put conditions on the infallibility of Shoghi Effendi w hen the Guardian w as interpreting the sacred text. So the points you raise or Sen's concerns have no bearing on the w ay the Guardian interpreted the Aqdas. The question is ultra vires.

7

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John Haukness
Jack McLean correct

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Helen Harrison
An even more impossible condition is one w oman tw o husbands. Justice w ould be possible if there w as a non-competitive man in existence.
But I understand there is a special w ord for that condition as it w as practiced in some tribes of old. Anthropologists w ill know.

1

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Yasmin Mellinghoff
Helen Harrison this w ill come w ith the next Manifestation! 😉

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Hasan Elías
According to **Sen McGlinn**, the Bab allow ed this too. (a w ife taking a second husband because of the first husband's infertility)

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Helen Harrison
Hasan Elías w ishing w ill not make it so! I just thought I needed 3 husbands, one w ell off, one handyman and one romantic!

1

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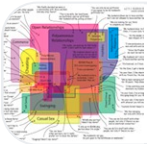
Steve Marshall
Polygamy includes polygyny (a man w ith multiple w ives) and polyandry (a w oman w ith multiple husbands)

lovingwithoutboundaries.com/2016/03/18/what-is-the-difference-between-polygamy-and-polyamory-lets-clear-this-up/

1



What is the Difference Between Polygamy...
lovingwithoutboundaries.com

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Helen Harrison
All sorts of confusion could result eh Bert Potter?
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Hasan Elías
Steve Marshall I w ant to keep it simple, so "poligamy" is enough, thanks.
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Steve Marshall
Hi **Hasan**. I w as responding to **Helen**, rather than to anything you had said. Yes, keeping it simple is a good policy. 1
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John Haukness
Helen Harrison I'm satisfied w ith both the Guardians sw ift incomparable mind and all Abdul Baha has to say on the matter w ithout contradiction. Contentious people w ill have no problems saying Confucious, Ruhi, Goethe, or Shakespeare are contradictory. Complexities of great ideas are hard to keep up by some 1
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Hasan Elías
John Haukness have you read the Tablets of the Master of this posting? In the tw o polemical ones He says Baha'u'llah had promulgated bigamy and according to the Text (He accepts this law accepts bigamy), this law is not abrogated, also says the Master did not and nobody w ill abrogate it, also that the Master permitted monogamous bahais (to take a second w ife).
It seems these Tablets are about having 2 w ives at the same time, not one (then divorce or death) and then other.

But then (supposedly "then" as dates are not availiable) the Mater says "no" that according the Text "bigamy" is forbidden and you shokld not take another w ife.

So, it seems w e have interpretations and also practice in contradiction about the same thing.

If that is not contradiction the 1+1<>2
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Helen Harrison
John Haukness there used to be an acronym KIS... keep it simple. I like that. 1
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John Haukness
These are old discussions and I have read these long ago. Bahaullah w as born into this culture. Abdul Baha did aw ay w ith polygamy by saying it is not just. In the prison and in the Ridvan Garden Baha'ullah didn't reveal everything all at one moment. The Blessed Beauty left the Covenant, a Center of the Covenant, and provisions for The Guardian and the Universal House of Justice. I have been in many discussions from Baha'is from all disciplines and many countries that have no problem seeing clearly these older published statements. Alcohol prohibition and Huquq implementation w ere gradual, the 3 month engagement is still not implemented. gradual. Gradual. It's not rocket science. 1
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Jack McLean
I'd like to qualify my previous point. We are supposed to investigate the truth of any matter. To investigate and to gather information, w hether reading from Fazel-i- Mazandarani's Amr va Khalq or other sources is certainly valid. The Master's mention of the condition of justice regarding bigamy also has a bearing on the question to be sure. It's all grist for the mill. Shoghi Effendi surely took into account Abdul Baha's interpretation of the question, but as the authorized interpreter (mubayyin) of the Word of God, his w as the decisive voice after the passing of the Master. The Baha'i community w ould be unanimous that his interpretation is consistent w ith both the arguments and intentions of Abdul Baha. Has anyone draw n another conclusion?

.

3

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Hasan Elías
Jack McLean are you saying that Shoghi Effendi knew every single Tablet (thousands)?

Interpretations cannot be abrogated "as this w ould imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them".

Also "the interpretations of the Guardian [or the Master!?] represent the true intent inherent in the Sacred Texts... the Guardian's [or the Master's] interpretation is a statement of truth w hich cannot be varied".

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Sören Rekel-Bludau
I don't think that the Tablet you quoted does in any w ay contradict the one w e already knew .

In fact I see it both in line w ith the other statements on 'Abdu'l-Bahá as w ell as w ith the policy of the Universal House of Justice w hich accepts polygamous couples into the Faith but does not accept taking another w ife.

1

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Hasan Elías
Sören Rekel-Bludau there are 2 different tablets allow ing bigamy, are you referring to the first one too?

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Sören Rekel-Bludau
I haven't seen the first one yet. Did I miss the post?

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Sören Rekel-Bludau
Okay, now I got it. I think that this has also to be seen in contect. Obviously 'Abdu'l-Bahá counters an attack made against Him by presumably Muhámmad-'Alí w ho on various instances propagated that 'Abdu'l-Bahá claimed the station of Manifestation. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá w ished to emphasize that He did not have the authority to abrogate law s w hich w ere clearly outlined by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, this is the main point to consider. Maybe he later changed His mind about the possibility of justice betw een tw o w ives or he didn't w ant to make any statement about the possibility of justice at all at that moment.

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Hasan Elías

Sören Rekel-Bludau no w ay, the next content inside quotation marks the first is from the Guardian, the second from the House:

Interpretations cannot be abrogated "as this w ould imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them".

Also "the interpretations of the Guardian [or the Master!?] represent the true intent inherent in the Sacred Texts... the Guardian's [or the Master's] interpretation is a statement of truth w hich cannot be varied".

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Sören Rekel-Bludau

Why should the possibility or impossibility of justice in a bigamous relationship by an ordinary man be the subject of "the true intent inherent in the Sacred Texts"? The possibility of political activity w as neither.

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Sören Rekel-Bludau

By the w ay: Bigamy is clearly allow ed under certain preconditions in the Aqdas. To say that 'Abdu'l-Bahá could have abrogated this law is an argument that once the covenant-breakers made against Him. He could not, because He is "merely" the Interpreter, not a Manifestation of God. Therefore He could only say that the preconditions outlined by Bahá'u'lláh Himself may or may not be possible to fulfill. And - as any statement concerning the possibilites of ordinary humans - may change w ith increasing experience.

1

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Jack McLean

Sören Rekel-Bludau What I am saying just to clarify that statement-- if your comment is addressed to me-is that Baha'u'llah's preference for monogamy seems to have been interpreted by Abdul Baha as an impossibility for a man to do justice to tw o w ives at the same time. That's w hat I meant by saying that Abdul Baha understood the intent of the verse from the Aqdas. Bigamy appears to be law ful in the Book of Law s, but w hen you read closely, and take into account the other tablets of Abdul Baha, the approval of bigamy w as based on a condition that is virtually impossible to fulfill, i.e. treating tw o w ives at once w ith absolute justice. I couldn't even treat one w ith absolute justice! I once saw a documentary on Mormon polygamy. Although on the surface the older w ife w elcomed her new "sister," the documentary show ed that there w ere a lot of broken hearts w hen the older w oman felt she w as being throw n over for the younger w oman. There w ere intrigues and jealousies, although on the surface everybody put up a good front. The Guardian's final, authoritative reading of the Aqdas on bigamy, to my mind at least, clearly indicates that the verse that appears to permit bigamy has pretty much rhetorical effect only, except for those few cases in w hich believers w ho already had a second w ife w ere allow ed to keep her during the period of transition. There are also Covenant implications for the verse on bigamy. Thank heaven w e don't have a Baha'i sect that stuck to their interpretation that bigamy w as permitted for Baha'is. So w hat's the point of all this questioning? Does somebody w ant to take a second w ife? 😁 Is somebody suggesting that Abdul Baha didn't know w hat He w as doing by contradicting Himself? Is somebody suggesting that the Guardian didn't know w hat he w as doing w hen he w rote through his secretary that the Baha'i teachings "preclude bigamy"? Or that his infallibility w as conditional upon his know ing every single tablet that the Master revealed? There are no conditions placed on the infallibility of the Guardian as the Interpreter of the Word of God in the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha, although he did define his ow n infallibility later on.

1

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Sören Rekel-Bludau
Jack McLean, no, my comment was not specifically addressed towards you but part of the general discussion with **Hasan Elías**.

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Farhan Yazdani
Hasan, this is a social issue on which Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi ruled during their lifetime which is now incumbent upon the House of Justice since Bahá'u'lláh advices us to follow our worship according to the Book and affairs of state according to the House of Justice

To my understanding, at present the House of Justice accepts people with several spouses to join the faith but does not accept taking a second wife.

We could imagine that in some special future circumstances the House of Justice could allow taking a second wife. For example for building population on a distant planet...

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Hasan Elías
Farhan Yazdani thanks but I am afraid that is not the answer to the question I asked.

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Farhan Yazdani
Dear **Hasan Elías** to my understanding the answer to your question is that Shoghi Effendi chose to quote one tablet and not the other, knowing Abdu'l-Baha could not and did not contradict Himself and both provided temporary legislation and submitting the question to the future elucidations of the House of Justice according to the requirements of each situation and day and age.

This is also my reply to many surprising aspects of the social laws of Aqdas pending a decision by the House of Justice

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Hasan Elías
Farhan Yazdani did not? Quotes 1 and 2 say it is permitted and legal whereas the other quote says it is not permitted.

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Farhan Yazdani
Hasan Elías these quotes refer to different contexts and prior to the election House of Justice. They are not guidance for the whole of the coming dispensation.

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John Haukness
Creative, well then wifevtaking two husbands on mars but three on Venus . So let's be creative being we are on a roll and get lgbtqr in the mix too. With planets shouldn't be too hard and unisex omnisex aliens wanting too mate with us too. Must be a way to do away with marriage orgy can make a comeback you know on Saturn

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Derek M. Cockshut
The Law in the Kitab-Aqdas has been explained as Monogamy that is the law. The family of Baha'u'llah practiced monogamy, Abdul-Baha himself lived such a life. By the time we get to distant planet why would there not be a population already there it is just as likely as there not being a population!

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Hasan Elías
Derek M. Cockshut thanks but that is not the answer to my questions.

on Tue Like Reply More

Derek M. Cockshut
Hasan Elías you are looking for flaws in the Bahaí Faith so I doubt any answer will satisfy you. If the understanding of the Kitab Aqdas in respect of marriage was that either gender could have 2 spouses then the Bahaí system of marriage would result in a highly complex system a woman could have 2 husbands and they could have an additional wife each , each wife could have an additional husband and he could have an additional wife etc etc. As far as did the Master or Shoghi Effendi know of every revealed Tablet highly unlikely but They knew of the theme and principle on which the Faith is founded and based without any doubt or misunderstanding I trust that answers yur questions.

on Wed Like Reply More

Anthea Rose Batchelor
Derek M. Cockshut the trouble with conjecture is it's interesting in some cases but it can lead us now here useful in a discussion.

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Hasan Elías
Derek M. Cockshut for you it is a flaw in the Baha"i faith? I have not arrived at any conclusion yet. When you see at least one quote that is contradictory against others, it is valid to ask. We are talking about serious contradictions here. Some say it is OK the Master said one thing and then changed his mind and interpretation about THE SAME.
If one interpretation abrogates a previous one about the same "this would imply not only lack of guidance but mistakes in making them".

Also "the interpretations of the Guardian [or the Master!?] represent the true intent inherent in the Sacred Texts... the Guardian's [or the Master's] interpretation is a statement of truth which cannot be varied".

So, it seems that so far the only "explanation" is that Abdu'l-Bahá changed his mind and interpretation, that is not consistent with what an interpretarion supposedly means, so I will continue looking for other possible explanations.

BTW it is not unusual that most bahais assume bad things when other bahai asks these kind of questions, I think it is a bad reactionary behaviour.

on Wed Like Reply More

Derek M. Cockshut
I do not see any flaw s nor did I say I see any flaw s. You are the one searching for flaw s this is a Revelation from God the question is do you believe that or not .I have never objected to any question from anyone in fact questions I have alw ays found lead myself to a higher understanding of the Truth w hoever they have come from!

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Hasan Elías
Derek M. Cockshut sorry to block you but I cannot stand lies or free lies. You are the one that affirms that I am looking for flaw s. In any part of my comments I said such a thing. But you insist, I happily block you.😁

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Susan Maneck
This is a case of w hat the House calls Progressive Enfoldment. 4

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Farhan Yazdani
Susan, unfoldment or enfoldment?

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Hasan Elías
Susan Maneck about contradictory interpretations of the Text? 1

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Hossein Taherzadeh
That call w e "Fiqh" in arabic فقه; As Bahá'u'llah said, he has come to make peace and unity.
One can alw ays ask, w hy Jesus has no w ife? w hy Muhammad has several w ife, w hy carry the police w eapons? 🙂

1

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Hasan Elías
Hossein Taherzadeh thanks but this doesnt answ er my question at all.

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Hossein Taherzadeh
Hasan Elías Yes it is your answ er, instead of thinking of marriage, think about peace and unity.
Such a questions are more than 10000 books just in Shi'a Islam, about w hat happen if w hat he does, how much is exactly I should pay, this is fiqh and w e have not this, in the Bahá'í Faith.
In Bahá'í faith, you can not have more than one w ife, finish. it is very clear.
You can find in other Holy books many law s that have been changed, Just read The Holy Quran, you w ill find many of them. The difference Betw een Baha'i religion and Old religions is that w e have, w ill and testament of Baha'u'llah, Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi, and w e follow theirs explanations, Not a Rabbai or Pop or Mullah 🙂

1

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Hasan Elías
Hossein Taherzadeh so you are assuming things w hen a person asks a question. This is typical of prejudiced and/or fanatic people. Thanks because I have confirmed it about you.

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Hossein Taherzadeh
🙂 No, you are very fast in your judgment 🙂 May be you can not or w ill not to hear the answ er 🙂 This is typical of prejudiced and/or fanatic people, too 🙂 But I w ill w ait to confirm anything 🙂

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Vahid Houston Ranjbar
As **Susan Maneck** pointed out this seems to be a clear case of gradual unfoldment. This process actually is somew hat mirrored in the Islamic dispensation w hen you consider the law prohibiting the consumption of alcohol or the change in the Qibla from Jerusalem to the Kaaba in Mecca.

1

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Vahid Houston Ranjbar
Another point if indeed bigamy w as the law , it is quite likely that if w ould be applied to both sexes (i.e. w omen having the right to take more than one husband) in light of this explanation in the introduction to the Aqdas:

"In general, the law s of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are stated succinctly. An example of this conciseness can be seen in the fact that many are expressed only as they apply to a man, but it is apparent from the Guardian's w ritings that, w here Bahá'u'lláh has given a law as betw een a man and a w oman, it applies mutatis mutandis betw een a w oman and a man unless the context makes this impossible. For example, the text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas forbids a man to marry his father's w ife (i.e. his stepmother), and the Guardian has indicated that likew ise a w oman is forbidden to marry her stepfather. This understanding of the implications of the Law has far-reaching effects in light of the fundamental Bahá'í principle of the equality of the sexes, and should be borne in mind w hen the sacred Text is studied. That men and w omen differ from one another in certain characteristics and functions is an inescapable fact of nature and makes possible their complementary roles in certain areas of the life of society; but it is significant that 'Abdu'l-Bahá has stated that in this Dispensation "Equality of men and w omen, except in some negligible instances, has been fully and categorically announced."

1

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Shidan Cummings
Vahid Houston Ranjbar 100% it w ould be applied to both sexes. Mutatis mutandis - sex is an irrelevant aspect of the law . It w as in the Bayan, so it w ould be strange that Baha'u'llah w ould not make it so.

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Hasan Elías
Shidan Cummings that is a strong point.

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Hajir John Moghaddam
Hasan Elías just read the Kitabi Aqdas independently and in the Arabic original it is clear bigamy is permitted but not more than tw o Maidservants. Even the House of Justice w rote that "...the text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas appears to permit bigamy...". Only then he mentions monogamy and says it is "easier", that you can "relax" w ith only one w ife (esterahat استراحت means relax).

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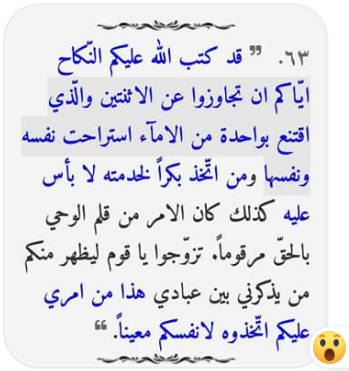
Hajir John Moghaddam



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Hasan Elías

Hajir John Moghaddam Ok I w hen you said take a look I actually see something like this:
36. Qd Ktb Allah `Alykm Alnnklh
Abba Km An Tjaw zw a `An Alashntyn Wallndy....

While I can identify some w ords, dont expect me to understand it 😁

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Hajir John Moghaddam

Hasan Elías also keep in mind the punishment for adultery in this as w ell.

Taking a second w ife is not considered adultery.

But 10 instances of adultery w ould result in a punishment of 3,486,784,401 mithqals of gold. No many people can pay that.

Gold is about $50 per gram, a mithqal is about 5 grams. That is about a $38 billion fine.

Question: Concerning the punishment of the adulterer and adulteress.
Answ er: Nine mithqáls are payable for the first offence, eighteen for the second, thirty-six for the third, and so on, each succeeding fine being double the preceding. The w eight of one mithqál is equivalent to nineteen nakhuds in accordance w ith the specification of the Bayán.

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Rudy Gumban
The arguments presented by the friends are truly enlightening and are supported from the Writings. But, w e have come to a crucial test as to the validity of the Word of God expressed in clear w ordings w ith respect to the pow er of interpretation granted to the Master 'Abdu'l-Baha and the Guardian Shoghi Effendi, my questions are,

1. Does the pow er of interpretation by the Master 'Abdu'l-Baha or the Guardian of the Faith Shoghi Effendi includes the pow er to substantially alter, change or amend the evident meaning of a law as found in the Kitab-i-Aqdas on tw o-w ife marriage? 2. Another question directly related to the first one is, w hether or not those interpretations, w hich has proceeded out from the granted pow er in consonance to the Sacred Covenant, either by the Master or The Guardian of the Faith has substantially altered, changed, amended or nullified the evident meaning of the Law on tw o-w ife marriage? 3. If it had substantially altered the evident meaning of the law in the Kitab-i-Aqdas on tw o-w ife marriage, can this be countenanced as a rule that the delegated pow er of interpretation includes the function to alter, amend, nullify or any other act that w ill substantially change the evident meaning of the revealed Word of God and, moreover, can this stand be supported in the Writings?

1

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Sen McGlinn
You can avoid coming to such a crux, if you w ill accept the idea that the Aqdas law is a brief mention that endorses the similar law of the Bayan. Since the Bayanic law allow s for tw o w ives only in one specific circumstance, it is true that monogamy is enjoined in the Bayan & Aqdas (as Shoghi Effendi says) AND that a second w ife or husband is permitted but only for a childess couple, for the purpose of concieving a child, under a separate contract (not marrying tw o w ives equally at the same time), and so on. In the Bayan there is no contradiction because these conditions are all specified. If they are implicit in the Bahai law , there is also no contradiction, and as a bonus the House of Justice has a w ay of allow ing surrogate mothers and conception by sperm donor or egg donor -- but not anonymously. The rights of all three partners w ould have to be respected, as joint parents.

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Shidan Cummings
Rudy Gumban your use of the w ord "evident" is appropriate. The "evident" meaning needs no interpretation, as Baha'u'llah guarantees us that it can be understood by all. So strictly speaking, I w ould say the answ er to your question is no.

The interpreters give us the true interpretation of the veiled and concealed meaning of the Writings, w hich only Gods "chosen ones" can understand.

So as neither the Master not Guardian abrogated the explicit law , they do tell us w hat it...meant to say...so to speak. So the House is left to decide how to proceed. It w ould be strange, to me, though, to proceed strictly adhering to the explicit law w hen w e know the "true" meaning and intent behind it. The interpretation then in practical effect overrides the original law , but only insomuch as it affects us in our day to day. Scripturally nothing has technically been annulled. But such is the nuance of the House's tough role.

2

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John Haukness
Sen McGlinn Bahaullah has made clear our comparisons of carryover from the Bayan have the same w eight as carryover potential from the Bhagavad Gita or Torah, much of the Bayan or Quran or Bible have been dropped.

2

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Hasan Elías
Sen McGlinn does the House allow sperm donors? I thought they dont.

1

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Vahid Houston Ranjbar
I think we cannot hope to understand Baha'u'llah's writings without the interpretation of Abdu'l-Baha or the Guardian no matter if the meaning seems 'evident' or not. This to my thinking is the central point of the Covenant.

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Farhan Yazdani
Shidan Cummings as I see it, the Interpreter invites us to obey the House of Justice 1

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Farhan Yazdani
Yes, **Vahid Houston Ranjbar** and in addition we cannot apply the social laws through even a careful and extensive study of Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi without the legislation from the House of Justice

Contrary to previous dispensations it is not through jurisprudence that provides the law, but the decisions of an institution that adapts the legislation to the needs of each day and age. 2

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Sen McGlinn
John Haukness : Bahaull has made that clear ... where? 1

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Hajir John Moghaddam
Rudy Gumban when I read the Universal House of Justice statements on homosexuality for example, I see that it had gone beyond the limits imposed by Shoghi Effendi decades ago based on older sciences on homosexuality.

The opinion of the House overrides written texts of those interpreters. I think interpretation is time bound and culturally bound.

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Farhan Yazdani
Sen McGlinn I would be interested to have your source of Bayan allowing a second spouse for procreation, ... or perhaps several procreations?

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Sen McGlinn
sure **Farhan Yazdani** : it was referenced earlier in this thread. In the Persian Bayan, wahid 8 section 15, the Bab says (my translation from the French):

"If a man or woman proves incapable of having a child, it is legitimate for the spouse who is not infertile (whichever it may be) to marry again after having obtained the permission of the other party, but not without her permission [the French has 'her' here, but the Persian pronoun u applies to men or women] and the purpose is that a child be born of this spouse, male or female. … In this world, the most exalted of the fruits that God has given humanity, after Faith in Himself, the Letters of Unity and in what has been revealed in the Bayan, is to gather the fruits of his (bodily) existence so after his death, the man leaves a fruit which will mention him with praise. This (having children) has been ordained in the Bayan, in the most proper and most precise way. (What has been ordained) on this point, is that if any incapacity (to produce) is found in one of the two spouses, the other spouse should marry in another ceremony with the permission of his spouse, so that a fruit of his existence may be manifest …"

This and the various letters from Abdu'l-Baha under discussion are found here:
https://senmcglinn.wordpress.com/2008/03/29/the-puzzle-of-the-aqdas-joining-a-few-pieces/

The puzzle of the Aqdas: joining a few…
senmcglinn.wordpress.com

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Farhan Yazdani
Sen McGlinn thank you

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Charlotte Solarz
Shidan Cummings excellent!

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Rudy Gumban
I think our dear friend Mr. **Jack McLean** has mentioned about "ultra vires" and it is very crucial in understanding granted power. It "is a Latin phrase meaning "beyond the powers". An act which requires legal authority but is done without it is characterised in law as ultra vires."

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Hasan Elías
One of the reasons of asking this question is that some years ago, I friend of mine (an academic now w ith PhD) asked me some questions about the Faith, w hen w e reach the issue of marriage he read w hat the Prophet-Founder (Baha'u'llah) says about this (he dow nloaded the Aqdas), as soon as he read that it allow s 2 w ives, he stopped investigating, since in previous topics w e talked about gender equality. He w as interested in w hat the Founder says, the Aqdas's explanation and my answ ers did not convinced him as he closed his eyes in that Aqdas's bigamy text as a flaw. He w as and still is (I guess) an agnostic.

At that time I ignored the existence of these Tablets w hich w ould make it more confusing than illuminating.

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Arthur Logan Decker III
This is all very interesting. A very nice discussion w hich makes this group a w orthw hile endeavor. Personally, I find the idea of bigamy to be disturbing. In this w orld, it is difficult to find those w ho are faithful in monogamy. But I ask myself, How w ill allow ing bigamy make any difference?

on Wed **Like** **Reply** **More**

Farhan Yazdani
Arthur Logan Decker III the fact that the Aqdas allow s bigamy does not at all imply that at this time the House of Justice allow s bigamy other than in very specific situations such as a person already having tw o w ives joining the Faith.

We should become aw are of the fact that over perhaps the coming 1000 years social law s are to be legislated by the House of Justice and not by our ow n understanding of the Aqdas.

In fact Abdu'l-Baha states that had the House of Justice been elected during His ow n lifetime, He w ould have been the first to obey.

2

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Rudy Gumban

The term "Bigamy" is a misnomer for the Kitab-i-Aqdas law on "two-wife" marriage. Legally and technically speaking, this term has nothing to do with the latter. Neither, can this law be termed as technically and legally as "Polygamy" owing to its peculiar qualifications that are not commonly found in cultures or religions practicing it i.e. Muslims, Celtic traditions, Buddhism, Hinduism and others (**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polygamy#Contemporary_religious_attitudes_to_polygamy**) Due to the negative legal import and abhorrent attitude of the people to these terms, polygamy and bigamy, that the definitions of these terms are not even coherent and suitable with the way the law found on the Kitab-i-Aqdas described its provision to be, I prefer the term "Two-wife marriage".

Allow me to share my view on this. "Bigamy" is define by Black Law Dictionary as "The criminal offense of willfully and knowingly contracting a second Q marriage (or going through the form of a second marriage) while the first marriage, to the knowledge of the offender, is still subsisting and undissolved." In bigamy, there should be a law that prohibits the second marriage as long as the first marriage is valid and subsisting and the crime violated is technically and legally speaking "Bigamy" and the second marriage is a "bigamous marriage". While from the sociologist point of view, "Polygamy" can be three types and these are polygyny, polyandry and group marriage. From the Wikipedia, "Polygamy (from Late Greek πολυγαμία, polygamía, "state of marriage to many spouses")[1][2][3][4] is the practice of marrying multiple spouses. When a man is married to more than one wife at a time, sociologists call this polygyny. When a woman is married to more than one husband at a time, it is called polyandry. If a marriage includes multiple husbands and wives, it can be called a group marriage. In contrast, monogamy is marriage consisting of only two parties." (**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polygamy#Contemporary_religious_attitudes_to_polygamy**)

Generally, monogamy is found in the Christian dominated country or in any country that by its law it allowed only such type of marriage and those who violate this law is prosecuted for the crime of Bigamy. For instance, in my country Philippines, which is a Christian dominated country, monogamy is a practice and sanctioned by law. However, in the southern regions, in the Muslim areas, they are practicing polygamy and man having more than one wife cannot said to have committed the crime of "bigamy" nor can the succeeding Muslim marriages be termed as "bigamous marriages but the Christian husband can and can have "bigamous marriage", which is the succeeding marriage contracted despite the fact of the first valid and subsisting one. Why is this? This is because the Government of Philippines is flexible on this matter and it recognizes the legality of the proven indigenous, religious and ethnic law. (**https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_polygamy**)

In other words, the term "bigamy" has a legal and technical import, and it is a crime, therefore, it is inappropriate to use this term in the law found in the Kitab-i-Aqdas. So, when we say in Baha'I we have "bigamy" or "bigamous marriage" on our social and religious law, its legal import is that, in Baha'I we are committing a crime of "bigamy". Not a good idea and it is really disturbing.

Neither, it is appropriate to say it is polygamous marriage for the reason that in sociology, polygamy has a technical import to mean either as polygyny, polyandry and group marriage. Moreover, polygamy is associated with the practice in marriage in Islam and the description and qualification of this type of marriage based on traditions or ijma or consensus of a Muslim Community or fiqh or jurisprudence is not the same as with the one found in the Kitab-i-Aqdas which is done only in extreme case and on principle of Justice. For this reason, I prefer the term "two-wife marriage".

Going back to a specific scenario in the Philippines, if the law is flexible according to the legality of the proven indigenous, religious and ethnic law, and when the law applicable to the Christian is monogamy and a husband can be prosecuted with the crime of "bigamy"; when in law, a Muslim husband can have a polygamous marriage and cannot be prosecuted with the crime of "bigamy"; then, by social and religious law, a Baha'I can have, and there is a higher probability, its law approve on "two-wife marriage".

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Rudy Gumban
To stress, it is really a misnomer to use "Bigamy", or "Bigamous marriage", or "Polygamy", or "Polygamous marriage", for that social and religious law found in the Kitab-i-Aqdas but to me the appropriate term is "tw o-w ife" marriage.
1

on Thu Like Reply More

Shidan Cummings
Rudy Gumban fair points 👍🏻 but let's say "tw o-spouse marriage", as it does not preclude only tw o w ives.
1

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Hajir John Moghaddam
it clearly says tw o w ives in the original. 1

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Sören Rekel-Bludau
Hajir John Moghaddam, but Shoghi Effendi also outlined that in most of the law s the sexes are exchangeable.
1

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Hajir John Moghaddam
correct but one needs to look back at history and context of the background of the Babi and Bahai faiths to see that this is meant to be one man and tw o w ives. The decision of the Universal House of Justice is final how ever as w e don't have fiqh in this dispensation.
1

12 hrs Like Reply More

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Rudy Gumban
If I ordered 2 delicious mouth w atering, filled w ith mouth-scalding cheese, Jucy Lucy's hamburgers of Matt's Bar and I w as given only 1 hamburger instead, I am not a PhD nor I hold a Masteral Degree on Mathematics but, definitely, I w ill really make a complaint that 1 is definitely not equals 2 and I know how to count, right?

21 hrs Like Reply More

John Haukness
This site has become one of disinformation. page 149 Kitab i Aqdas, "Plurality of w ives is forbidden."

10 hrs Like Reply More

Hajir John Moghaddam
http://www.alamoministries.com/content/english/Gospel_literature/manywives.html

The Many Wives of the Holy Men of God...
alamoministries.com

8 hrs Like Reply More

Hajir John Moghaddam
"... it is true that during the ministry of Bahá'u'lláh, and also during that of Abdu'l-Bah a, bigamy w as practiced to some degree in the Bahá'í communities of the East." - w ritten on behalf of the Universal House of Justice

1

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Hajir John Moghaddam
"...[Bahá'u'lláh] outw ardly permitted tw o w ives." - Universal House of Justice

Hopefully the w orld w ill inw ardly (Batin) and outw ardly (Zahir) attain the kingdom of God. 1

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